

Natural Resources Wales permitting decisions

Higher Hall Poultry Limited (Higher Hall Farm) Decision Document

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Normal variation

The variation number is: [EPR/HP3636KB/V005](#)

The applicant /operator is: [Higher Hall Poultry Limited](#)

The Installation is located at: [Higher Hall Farm, Bowling Bank, Wrexham, LL13 9RT](#)

We have decided to issue variation for Higher Hall Farm operated by Higher Hall Poultry Limited.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

1 Overview of variation

The variation adds two 199 kWth input biomass boilers to the permit. Both are identical to the other three already permitted, therefore following the variation there will be a total of five 199 kWth input biomass boilers at the site, giving a site aggregated thermal input of just under 1 MWth input or 995 kWth input. The biomass boilers are fuelled on virgin woodchip only, this is not considered waste. The biomass boilers are not considered Medium Combustion Plant as each discharge emissions to air via their own individual stacks and each are under 1 MWth input. The biomass boilers are used to provide hot water which in turn is used to heat the four poultry sheds at the site.

There are no changes to the bird numbers at the site due to the variation. There is no change to the installation boundary due to the variation.

To incorporate these changes into the permit, two emission points are added to Table S3.2, one for each new biomass boiler, the plan in the permit has also been amended to show the location of the two new emission points.

2 Legislation

NRW is satisfied that this decision is compatible with its general purpose of pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales and applying the principles of sustainable management of natural resources. All applicable European directives have been considered in the determination of the application.

3 Our determination

The key issue for this determination is assessment of emissions to air from the two new biomass boilers. Natural Resources Wales has a position relating to permitting of biomass boilers at EPR intensive farms, specifically in relation to assessment of air emissions. The position states a quantitative assessment of air emissions will not be required where:

- The fuel is derived from virgin timber and;
- The biomass boiler appliance and its installation meets the technical criteria to be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive, and;
- The aggregate boiler net rated thermal input is:
 - Less than 0.5 MWth, or;
 - Less than 1 MWth where the stack height is greater than 1 metre above the roof level of any buildings within 25 metres (or where there are no buildings within 25 metres, the stack height must be a minimum of 3 metres above ground) and there are:
 - No special areas of conservation (SAC), special protection areas (SPA), Ramsar sites or sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) within 500 metres of the emission point(s)
 - No national nature reserves (NNR), local nature reserves (LNR), ancient woodlands (AW) or local wildlife sites (LWS) within 100 metres of the emission point(s)
 - Or less than 2 MWth where, in addition to the above criteria for 1 MWth boilers, there are:
 - No sensitive receptors within 150 metres of the emission point(s)

The operator has confirmed the fuel is virgin woodchip and that the boilers meet the requirements of the renewable heat incentive.

The two boilers being added aggregate to less than 0.5 MWth input, including the existing boiler the net thermal input at the site now aggregates to just under 1.0 MWth input. The existing boilers have been operational since 2014 therefore are comfortably considered within background air quality, therefore we consider it overly conservative to consider the existing impacts in the assessment and we will consider the two new boilers only. The primary pollutant of concern for habitat receptors from combustion of virgin wood is oxides of nitrogen (NOx). There is no exceedance of NOx critical level at the closest habitat site (River Dee SSSI), the current concentration is predicted to be well below the critical level which will include the emissions from the three existing biomass boilers, with sufficient headroom for the expected small impacts from the two new boilers. As the two boilers aggregate to less than 0.5 MWth input as per current NRW position, no further assessment of air impacts is required.

We don't consider it necessary to implement emission limit values or monitoring requirements for the two biomass boilers due to their small size and expected small impacts. This is in line with our position above as if they meet the criteria mentioned above we consider the emissions are unlikely to pose a significant risk to human health or habitats.

There has been no other risk assessments completed as part of the variation, as the only change from the two new biomass boilers are emissions to air.